

RDoDo3012797

U.S. Naval Historic Center
11 September Project
Civilian Response

Interview with Jeffrey Mark Parsons
Date of Interview

[DISC ONE]

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, I am interviewing, can you state your name, sir?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: JEFFREY MARK PARSONS.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, you are with?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I'm an Assistant Chief Patrol Agent with the United States Border Patrol. And, I'm stationed in Del Rio Sector Headquarters, Del Rio, Texas.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, can you provide us with a telephone number and an address?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, telephone number is area code 830-778-7111. And the address here is United States Border Patrol Sector Headquarters, 2401 Dodson, D-O-D-S-O-N, Avenue, Del Rio, two words, D-E-L R-I-O, Texas, 78840.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, since we may have a digital copy of the transcript, may even have a digital version of the interview, do you have an email address?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it's, God, let me get this right. I'll have to pull it up. I never write myself, so, hold on.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Let me pause the tape.

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JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I think is jparsons@usdoj.gov.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I think that's what it is. I'm pretty positive it's jparsons@usdoj.gov.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Okay. We always get some biographical information first, before I talk about September 11th. So, could you tell me what year you were born?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: 9/11 Personal Privacy

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, where?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: 9/11 Personal Privacy

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, did you grow up in 9/11 Personal Privacy

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And you attended elementary and high school there?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I went, you know, in San Diego, San Diego County, moved around a little bit, but attended several schools there. And, quit high school in my junior year and went in the Army, joined the Army.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, interesting.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Went with, and had a great time, I was with the Air Cab of Fort Lewis, with the Rangers of Fort Stewart and with the 509th Airborne over in Vincenza, Italy.

MALE INTERVIEWER: 509th, that's interesting. You joined the Army in what year?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That would have been 1973.

MALE INTERVIEWER: You did your basic training?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Fort Ord.

MALE INTERVIEWER: At Fort Ord.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Uh-huh.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And your branch was?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Army.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, well, but what branch of the Army?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I was with, branch?

MALE INTERVIEWER: Infantry?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well I was with the Infantry originally. I had an MOS of 11 Bravo, which is Infantry. And, went to Fort Lewis, Washington with an Air Cavalry unit where I did my AIT, which is your Advanced Infantry Training.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, that was what year?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, that would have been, I think probably in the same year, right after Boot Camp you go through AIT, so, it was right around the same, you know, right after Boot Camp.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Which is what year?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: '73.

MALE INTERVIEWER: '73, so you are, missed the Vietnam War?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, yeah, they were still over there but they weren't sending anybody else. And, I think they actually pulled everybody out in '75 when the, Saigon fell it was

actually 1975. But, yeah, they weren't sending anybody anymore when I . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: So you weren't concerned, I mean, did you join to go to Vietnam, or, just joined to join?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, I just joined to join. I needed to get away from, I was 17 and I just needed to get away from everything. And the Army was actually great because the Army I got my, unbeknownst to me, they automatically had you take the GED, which I did. And, I passed it. So, I ended up with a diploma even, and they just did that during boot camp, one night, or, one afternoon they took us, the guys who didn't have diplomas, and, gave us a test. And, I, about a month later, they gave me this form that says I passed and now I was a high school graduate. So, it was pretty cool.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, so, you first started off in Infantry and then you did the Air Cavalry?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, that is, actually, the Infantry, the Blues Platoon of the Air Calv is the Infantry portion of the Air Calv. It's, it's just a way of moving troops from one point to another using helicopters. And, the Infantry generally walks or rides or whatever. But, in an Air Calv, you know, the Infantry, which are called the Blues Platoon, they use helicopters for transport. Then you have tactics that are built around

helicopter, you know, getting in and out by helicopters and stuff as opposed to, you know, other means and what not.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did you deploy anywhere as a Blue?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No. No. We, all training.

MALE INTERVIEWER: All training. And, then you were, you went from Air Calv to?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, then they were, at the time, recruiting, they were starting up the first ranger battalion in Fort Stewart, Georgia. And, they were recruiting for, they wanted to fill the ranger, they wanted a whole battalion. And, I think they had a battalion, but, it was spread out. Companies were spread out, like, Charlie Company was in Fort Benning. They were the ones that were the aggressors at ranger school. And, they had another company somewhere's else and that, but, they were fragmented. There wasn't that much emphasis on them. Now they have, I think, three ranger battalions, but, this was the first one, they were recruiting for it. And, that, you know, at the time, and I still think they are, in the Army, anyway, the rangers are a pretty tough outfit. So, I said, I want to go for that.

MALE INTERVIEWER: What were you, at the time, what was your grade? What was your rank?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I was, I think I was still a, I think I had just made PFC, which is an E3.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, this was what year?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, '74, early '74.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, so, pretty quickly.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it was pretty quick. Yeah, pretty quick. It all kind of fell into place.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, so, you went through the ranger school, I guess that's, is that Fort Benning?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I went through jump school, okay, a paratrooper school en route to the ranger battalion. You don't go through ranger school until you get there, and they a lot so many slots and it goes by however they want to do this. But, jump school . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: You had to get your jump wings first.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Before you could report to ranger, to the ranger battalion because you would do training, but, you wouldn't necessarily go to ranger school until they had a slot open for you.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you got your jump wings and then you reported to ranger training.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I reported to the ranger battalion.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, that, reported to the ranger battalion, but you didn't . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, in Fort Stewart, Georgia. That was where, that's where they are based out of. The ranger . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: But you didn't get your tab at that?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, I never went to ranger school. Ranger school is in Fort Benning, Georgia, as well. But, I did not go to ranger school. No.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you were, what they call a tab wearer, but not a tab bearer, is that how they?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, you didn't wear it if you didn't get it, because before, and I actually would have, had I stayed there, but, I had an option before I got a chance to go to ranger school, to go to the 509th Airborne, which was in Vincenza, Italy, at the time. And, it was a small battalion, airborne unit. And, I wanted to go to Europe and, you know, I said, I've got to take that. So, I . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: What year, this was '75?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, this would have been '74 as well. Probably, oh, late '74.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I think they are still in Vincenza.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, there's still, there's a unit there, but it's not the 509th. They rotated the 509th out about four or five years ago, from what I understand. But, they are still an Airborne battalion. It's part of, and it was very interesting and intriguing to me because it was a, and it still is, it's part of the Allied Commander at Mobile Force. In other words, every allied country in Europe has an Airborne unit that is

committed to this Allied Commander at Mobile Force and it is headed by, whoever, whatever country is the head of the, NATO, at the time. At the, you know, whatever general . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Secretary General.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: When I was there, it was a, an English General was actually in charge of the Allied Commander at Mobile Force. Now, we had our own commanders, obviously, as Americans. But, we fell under this, whatever NATO decided to do, we would have gone and done it. We trained together, we exchanged jump wings. We got wings, you know, I went to, I jumped out of balloons in England and I got German jump wings and we, you know, just did, went to Belgium commando school. I mean, there was all kinds of these opportunities that you had with this outfit. It was so much fun. We did a lot of training, together with the foreign allied paratroopers, and it was really great.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, made good friendships.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, good friendships, I mean, the uniforms, you'd show up in your formation in the morning when you had one of your sister outfits, and, nobody, you couldn't recognize what uniform who was in because we traded, traded stuff and they, and we didn't make them, like, when they came for training and we went for training, to get the real jump wings, you know, you had to go through pretty rigorous training. Well, these guys were already airborne qualified, so, we didn't,

you just made them familiar with your aircraft and with the equipment, and, you know, you let them get five jumps and then they got the wings. Just like what they, they would do the same for us. Like, in England, I went and made five balloon jumps, and, you know, all they did, their harnesses are different, the parachutes are a little different, that's how they train over there, is in balloons. It was cheaper. So, I got my British wings jumping out of balloons, got my German wings jumping out of a Huey, but, it was just a little different parachute harness. So, it was just, it was a lot of fun. And that's why I opted to go and leave the rangers and go to the, just for a straight Airborne unit.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, you were in that unit for how long?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Two years, just about two years and then I got out.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did you see any kind of deployment or anything?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Not an official deployment. No. Darn near started World War III single-handedly one time, but that wasn't my intention. But, we were in, we went all over the world on the NATO exercises. Like, we went to Turkey and Germany and, you know, things, but, no, we were never actually deployed. We were on the tarmac a few times, really never knew what was going on, but, and then they called, the would call it off. There was, I

guess during the time when we had some problems with missile sites in Turkey and selling weapons to them when President Ford was in there. There was some things that were, you know, we never really heard about, but, we were on standby for, but we never were actually deployed in a combat for anything.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, and then after that you got out of the Army?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, I got out in 1976.

MALE INTERVIEWER: As a?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Sergeant, E5 Sergeant.

MALE INTERVIEWER: E5?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Buck Sergeant. And, spent about a year working odd jobs, construction, what not.

MALE INTERVIEWER: In the, in the California area?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Right. San Diego.

MALE INTERVIEWER: San Diego.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: And then I had applied for the Border Patrol.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Why didn't you join the Navy as a Naval historian, I'm just curious? You are from San Diego, that's a Navy town, or the Marine Corps.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, that's probably why. You know, I mean, I had a brother that was in the Army. There was no particular reason other than . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: You wanted to get away from San Diego.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I wanted to get away from San Diego, number one. But, my number one priority was also the Navy and the Marines a lot of times deployed to, like, Japan and, well, Japan and places like that. Whereas the Army went to Europe and, you know, they had, I thought, better places to go. I don't know, it wasn't really a, it didn't, I didn't want to be in the Navy because I wanted to do, I wanted to actually be in the special forces and stuff. And, but, I don't want, I'm not that fond of water, although I ended up in water enough, but, where, you know, you just accidentally landed in it a lot of times. But, so, the Seals would not have been something that I would have wanted to do. I would have probably tried it, but, I just, you know, I'm not really that fond of . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Swimming in cold water.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, I mean, you know, I like all the other crap, and that's why I say the Seals are just one notch above everybody because they do everything everybody else does plus they can do the underwater shit, which I, God bless them, because they can have it. But, somebody's got to do it. Those guys are good. You know, very, very good. I've none some over the years.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you got out of the Army. You did some odd jobs and then you joined the Border Patrol?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, well, I had, it's an interview process that you go through. And you take a test and then you got to go through a process and it takes, it took about nine months and I . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well why the Border Patrol.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, I had grown up in San Diego. I had seen the Border Patrol around and I, you know, they were kind of mysterious. They spoke Spanish. And, you know, it was a job, an outdoors job and I like the outdoors. The same think that kind of drove me towards Special Option in the Army was what drove me into Border Patrol, rather than being a police officer. I wanted to do something in law enforcement, but, I knew I didn't want to be a city cop. And, being out in the country, being out at night tracking and doing all that type of stuff seemed like a lot of fun. And, actually, was, it was a lot of fun.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Still is?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I don't get to do it anymore because I'm a Staff Officer, but, yeah, I do, every chance I get I jump in a helicopter or I try to get out in the field and go cut some sign with the guys. But, I just don't get to do it anymore as often. The last time I was able to do it with any consistency was when I ran a station in Cruzal [ph.] Springs. I ran the Border Patrol Station there from '93 to '96. And, I could get out in the field, you know, any time I wanted. And, now I was a

Staff Officer, you just, it's like, you all have your staff positions. They can't get out and go fly, you know, or go do what they used to do. They just can't, you know, you can't do that.

MALE INTERVIEWER: It comes with the pay grade, I guess.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. It comes with the pay grade, it comes with the job. And, I miss it. Yeah. It's the most fun, and I'd do it all over again.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you were in the Border Patrol about, oh my gosh . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I've been in the Border Patrol 24 years.

MALE INTERVIEWER: 24 years. And, you basically worked your way up as a, as just a regular Border Patrol Officer and just and you've always been stationed in the southwest?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Can you, sort of, briefly, go over that evolution?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I started in Calexico, California 1977. In 1983 I was promoted to Supervisor Border Patrol Agent in El Centro, California, which is in the same sector. It's, so, it's, it was only about, the station was only about ten miles away. And, then, in 1985, I put in for a transfer back to Calexico as a Supervisor and spent another five years down in

Calexico. So, I had a total of 13 years in El Centro sector, working in those two different stations.

MALE INTERVIEWER: What is the, what was your average day like down there . . . ?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: You never, you never knew what you, we got into so much stuff, you know. I mean, you catch drugs and smuggle loads and you get in high speed chases. And, you know, you never knew what was going to happen. It was just, you'd track. One of the things I enjoyed doing was tracking. We did most of our tracking at night because that's when we had most of our alien crossings, is at night out in that area, because it was all flat farmland and they couldn't cross in the daylight. You'd see them. So, they'd try, they crossed at night.

MALE INTERVIEWER: You just get out in the middle of a field with camouflage and a night scope and . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, that's the military. We would do that if we had specific information on where a smuggling load might pick-up. I might sneak down with a night scope and do that sort of thing. And, I've done a lot of that. But, as a general rule, what you would do is, you have drag roads along the border that we'd drag. It's just a dirt strip. And you drag tires behind it and you, so you clean it up. And then at night you would go out there and you would check this drag road for sign, you know, we have lights on the vehicles and you would drive along and then

you would see brush outs, or, you know, group footprints, or, however. You know, they would try to hide their tracks sometimes by using cardboard or whatever, and you would pick up the trail from there and then start moving them. A lot of times they . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: With a, with like, with a dog or something?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, just tracking. A flashlight and you.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Just with your mark one eyeballs.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yes, that's it. Now, as the years progressed, I mean, we employed, you know, other resources such as we did have night vision goggles and scopes and stuff. We originally had starlight scopes and we all know how those were. I mean, they were the best you had for a while, but, after about two hours of looking through a starlight scope, you could see anything you wanted to see, you know. Then you'd see sparkles for three days. But, anyway, we, so you would track groups and then you would try to look ahead and, you know, put your goggles on, see if you could spot them up there. But, most of the time, we knew the area and you knew how to chase them and how to make up ground on them by having other units up ahead of you. And, a lot of times we knew where they were going because we had lost a trail before and we knew they picked up in certain areas. We would make a quick plan to lay in on the smuggler and grab him, you know, or try to stop him whenever they loaded up. And, you know, it was a blast. We had lots of long 16, 18 hour days.

Because whenever you caught all this stuff you had to process it, especially if you were going to put people in jail for smuggling, you had to do up all that case paperwork. A lot of fun. A lot of good people. A lot of good memories. I wouldn't trade it for nothing.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you did that for approximately how many years?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, in the field, I came out of the field in 1996 to the current position I'm at now that I've held for five years. And, so, that would have been 19 years in the field.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Wow! Anything, anything truly unusual? Any special decorations or . . . ?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, you know, I don't know what the statute of limitations are on some of this stuff. You know, what's funny, people ask that all the time. And, when you live in this environment and you say, anything truly unusual . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Everything is truly unusual.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, to the normal person, but, to us, it's not. You know, it's, because we all experience it and it happens so often. And, I've never really, whenever I'm asked that question, I never can really put my finger on an exact thing. All of it was fun. All of it was interesting, you know, if you start telling stories about things, but, you know, things

like, I had this one particular car that outran me three times, personally. And I got tired of looking at the son of a bitch, quite frankly. You don't have to use that quote.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I won't use that word.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: But, you know, he, we knew where he was loading up and this guy was just, he had a fast car. His car would do about 150 miles per hour.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Wow! What kind of car was it?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, it was a, it was a Crown Victoria Station Wagon or something, it was in the late, or, early '80's sometimes. And, it was an older one. It was an early '70's model. One of them ones with the wood grain paneling on the side. But, the, you know, the guy outran me three times and I got tired of it. And, you know, he wouldn't, a lot of times they would head south and go through the border, head back into Mexico. But, this guy wouldn't. He would head north and just outrun you. We couldn't catch him, we didn't have anything that could catch him, nor did the Highway Patrol. So, one night we knew the group was coming over and, because of where they had found the tracks across the border. And, I said, I wasn't going to let this guy get away from me again. So, I called up my buddy who was an airplane pilot, Border Patrol pilot, and he got out of bed at 2 in the morning and he hopped in his airplane and he got up there. And, finally, we got this guy stopped and,

without, making a long story short, we got this guy stopped, and, with the airplane. It was a great asset to have. And, we, of course, the first thing we did, all of us agents, you know, we got the people out, and got them secured. And, all of us, there was about five of us, we walked up and we popped the hood on that car just to see what the hell he had in there. And, he had a stripped down 327, or, no, he had a 454. I didn't know that much about it. But, one of the guys, it was a 454 and it had all the smog stuff off of it, didn't have, and it was just clean as a whistle and had put a lot of money, had it tricked out, headers, and, you know, shiny, all this shiny stuff. And it was on a really piece of junk looking car, but, under the hood was just like a mechanic, you know, right off the showroom floor. And, then another time, we had fun. I used like to work smuggling cases, catching these guys. You know, we'd jump inside the vehicles, you know, and grab them before they took off. And, you know, I mean, you know, there was just a lot of things. This one time we saw this other vehicle that we knew was going to be a load vehicle and we knew that we weren't going to be able to outrun it because it was a big Old's '98. And, we went, damn, you know, we're not going to be able to catch this thing when he loads up. And we had to let him load up so that we had the evidence, you know, to make the case. So, you are in a dilemma. Do you want to let the guy load up and then outrun you? Or, do

you want to catch everybody before they load up and have a chance on not being able to make a case on the guy because you don't know who the driver is going to be? So, we came up with option C, which was, we just relieve the vehicle of a couple of its plug wires so it wouldn't run very efficiently. And, so, they loaded up and they took off on us and pulled in behind them, and as soon as we pulled in behind them, hit the red lights, and the guy guns it and tries to get out of there and his car doesn't work very well. So, we caught him too. But, there is actually a funnier one that. I've got a really good one that was very, you'd have to understand, I don't know if you'd really recognize, the smuggles, they were very nervous. And they, a lot of times, this was out in the country. You have to understand, this is out in the middle of no where. You are in the farmland, but, you are way out, 1:00 in the morning. There's no traffic out there, nothing. You are 40 miles from town. And, we had been working this load. And, I was, I was running a Special Ops Unit, specifically, we called it our Delta Unit. And, it was to interject smuggling loads and we were very successful at it because we would just target a specific place where they picked up and we would target those people until, we would sit on them until we got them. Sometimes it was the first night, sometimes it would take a week. But, we didn't move. We stayed there. I mean, we didn't, we'd go in, night after night

after night until we got them. You know, a lot of the guys, went, well, nothing's happening, let's move over here. And, I, my philosophy was, then we just wasted those last three nights that we sat there if we move. And, it, and we always did get them. Just, they always would show up, I mean, some, we had a few get away. We've had some weird stuff happen. But, this one particular night I had my guys down at the corner, on foot, in the weeds, you know, breathing through straws with binoculars, watching where this group was going to get picked up. And this is dead silence, crickets out in the middle of no where. And, so, I'm up north a little ways in my vehicle going, you know, with my lights out. And, had a couple other units out there that had kind of got off the road and hidden, and this was, you know, pitch dark, black out, and all, and here comes this vehicle. And we see this guy come out of the brush. And it was a guide. And he had put this little marker. They would put a little marker, sometimes a rock, sometimes a stick on the white line in the road, so when the smuggle drove by he would know that they were there by this little marker. And, because they already knew the pick-up spot. But, that would tell him, okay, they are there as well, the vehicle, the marker, the guy puts the marker out, the vehicle goes by. So, okay, no big deal. Well, the vehicle goes down, he turns around. So, my guys are going, okay, he's turning around, we think he is coming back to load up. So, I'm on my

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way, I'm up north and I'm lights out and I'm going the same way, parallel, about a half a mile north. Well, the guy drives by. And he doesn't stop. So, the guide comes out and he looks at the disappearing tail lights and he drags a little bigger piece of wood out to the road there and sets it there and the guy turns around and he comes back. So, we think he's going to load up again. And, now, of course, I'm parallel, I'm up north again. The guy drives by. The guide comes out and he's getting a little irritated so he goes and gets a little bigger branch and he drags it out onto the road there, goes back in. The guy turns around, he comes back, and he did this, oh, about, and he drove by again. Guys, okay, he didn't pick up, we are going, God damn, what the hell is he going to do here? Well, finally, the guide got really frustrated because this guy wasn't stopping and he kept increasing the size of this marker until it was, I mean, you know, an eight-foot chunk of wood that he had out there along the shoulder of the road, you know. So, finally, he went in, he comes out, and he just drug, basically, a whole tree and blocked the highway. And, my guy says, you ain't going to believe this, the guy just put a roadblock across the highway. So, the guy comes back, now he has to stop because there's this tree trunk across the highway. And, so, they all, they at least come out, they load up, they drag the tree trunk off the highway, they turn around and they turn up the road that I'm on.

Well, by this time, I had four or five units out there because everybody was listening to this and it was becoming quite humorous. Well, you have to picture this. It's pitch black. The guy thinks he's just been, just sneaky beans, there ain't nothing, nobody in the world has seen any of this stuff going on. And, all of a sudden, he's going up the road and a vehicle pulls out behind him. And then he goes up a little ways more and another vehicle pulls out behind him. And a little ways more and another vehicle pulls out. Pretty soon he's got him and six vehicles on him. Nobody's turned on their sirens and blue and red's yet, because, I made that call and I just wanted to have some fun with this guy. I figured, we are going to make his night interesting. And, usually, the thrill was the part of watching him load up and then catching him. After that it was all, you had to do a lot of paperwork. But, I had this other guy, he had, coming across the road, and, another highway and he sees this convoy coming up the road. And, he goes, hey Jeff, you think he's getting a little suspicious about now? I said, yeah, I think he probably is. So, in those days, we got tired, this was before we really had a pursuit policy like we do now. And, we got tired of chasing these guys because they would run off the road and wreck and hurt people. So, we had a way of stopping them that worked. And, you know, what I did was I would say, okay, I want you to, I would tell one of the guys, pull up along

side of him and I'll hit him. And, I said, we'll take him, we'll just, kind of, just take him off the road. If he tries to ram me, just get out of the way, back off, and I'll handle it. And, a lot of times we would get a unit in front, one on the side, we'd just box him and take him off the highway. And that's what we ended up doing with this guy. He tried to ram my guy that I had sent up alongside, so, I just had him pull up in front, I pulled up alongside, we just took him off the road. And, he knew he was had, I mean, there was nothing he could do. And, it was just funny because he, and you know that he had to be mad at his partner who drug the tree trunk across the highway, probably saying, you know, I knew something was wrong. I just knew it. But, that was quite, that was funny. We laughed about that.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Were you able to go back and get the people that . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, they were in the vehicle, they loaded them all up.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, that's what I mean, that's what the guy did. He, once they stopped, they loaded all the people in the vehicle, they took off. And, you know, he was all by himself out there. So, you know, or, thought he was, and then we just started peeling off the side roads and pretty soon it was, you know, there's 20 miles of nothing and there's six cars on the

road. You, who are trying to be sneaky, and six patrol cars behind you. And you ain't feeling real good about this time because you are about to go to jail.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And these people get extradited or they end up in American jails?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, they went to jail.

MALE INTERVIEWER: They went to jail.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, the driver, the smugglers. Yeah, we put smugglers in jail, that's what we did.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Interesting. And, so you, but, you got out of that kind of field operations work in 1995, you say?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, about '96. Because, yeah, as an Agent, you move, you work your way up. It was, first line supervisor, then you would be an assistant patrol, charge patrol, if you want to move up you got to go through the staff, the staff positions, go on up to the chief level and what not. But, yeah, you eventually have to come out of the field. It's fun.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did you have to get any more education, or?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No.

MALE INTERVIEWER: No.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No. I was lucky, you know, they have an assessment test that you take to get a promotional score and I did well on that. So, it, all my schooling is pretty much the school of hard knocks. God blessed me with, one thing he did

give me was common sense. So, if it wouldn't have been for that I'd have been lost, but, thank God for that. He gave me good common sense and logic. So, I don't have to get hit in the head with a hammer to know it hurts. I can watch the other guy scream and go, you know what, I don't want that to happen to me.

There's a lot of people that have to have it happen to them, you know.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, what brought you to Washington in September of 2001?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Actually, got there in August and I was there for two and a half months. And, I was, our headquarters is there. Headquarters Border Patrol is in Washington DC on 425 I Street.

MALE INTERVIEWER: 425 I Street.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I Street, N.W.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Okay.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: And, I was there on a detail, I had done some work in the past with developing IT solutions in trying to find the best way to solve IT problems within the Border Patrol and identify equipment needs and people that could put stuff together for us to solve, you know, issues and be able to analyze data better and all these type of things. And, I had been on a national mapping project for the Border Patrol that involved working with the Corps of Engineers and it was a pretty

expensive contract that we had, doing, just identifying the mapping needs and what not. And, they needed some help, and this was, this was several years earlier. But, anyway, headquarters Border Patrol needed some help. They wanted to automate some of the things up there at headquarters and they wanted somebody to come in that had some background in IT that, you know, you don't have to be an expert, all you have to be is a good manager and recognize resources and identify them. And, that's what I'm good at. So, I was up there for that. Really it's a, it was an unofficial detail. I was there on detail, but it wasn't really any title to it. I was just, you know, basically there to try to solve some of the IT issues, automate the office and help them develop a plan for, you know, automation of information from field level all the way up to the command center so they would have real-time data, digital pictures. You know, you know what I'm talking about, that the military's got. They are doing it all right now. The mapping stuff is huge, how you can look at a map and data behind points on a map and how it means so much more than if you just read that in a report somewhere. It's incredible. But, anyway, that's what I was doing up there.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, Border Patrol is under INS, which is under?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Department of Justice.

MALE INTERVIEWER: DOJ. Okay.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Right.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you were up there. Do you wear a uniform, at this point in your career?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I, yeah. I had uniforms with me and I wore them periodically over at headquarters, but, I had suits and ties as well. I probably wore the suit and tie and stuff more than the uniform. But, I did have the uniforms with me. And, yeah, I do like to wear the uniform. I wear it as often as I, as often as I can. In Washington it was a little bit of a headache because a lot of times, especially being there on details, some of the guys would want to go out and eat or something after work, you know, instead of going right back to the hotel or, you know, whatever. And, so, it was hard to get, we are not like the military where the military can go and drink and stuff in uniform. We can't do that because we have guns and stuff and it's just different. So, you have, you have to go change. So, a lot of times, you know, I'd go in work at headquarters, you wouldn't wear a uniform. Not specifically for that, I mean, I had meetings and sometimes it just was more appropriate to wear a suit and tie. I work, I did some work with the people at the Pentagon, made some contacts over there. That's the kind of thing I'm good at. Nobody had ever tapped into that. And, I said, you know, I bet the Pentagon has run into this problem and has probably solved it. So, why don't we

see what they've done about these issues. And, sure enough, I made friends with somebody that was in the Air Force over there and happened to run IT at one time for them, but, knew the guy that did, and he knew the guy that was actually doing exactly the same thing, or, had actually done the same thing for the Air Force that we needed done. And, I hooked them up, and, anyway, so it should work for us. But, anyway, that's how I got involved with the Pentagon and with the Border Patrol and I just so happened to be staying at the hotel right across from the Pentagon at the Residence Inn which is right there on Army Navy Drive, right across the street from the south entrance to the Pentagon, right next door to DEA headquarters. You know where that is, right there?

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's sort of in Rosslyn, right?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, no, it's on the other side.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Crystal City.

MALE INTERVIEWER: It's sort of near the Navy Annex, isn't it?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, it's Crystal City. Yeah, I think they said the Navy Annex is down there somewhere. But, it's Army Navy Drive. If you are coming south on 395 out of DC.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay. Yeah. Right off of Route 1, right?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, you got the Pentagon on your right and you got the Residence Inn on your left.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Okay. Yeah, I know where it is.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: It's that hotel right across the street there. So, and I was actually going to go over to the Pentagon that morning and meet with somebody and . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, you were in a car, or, you were in a . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I was in my, actually, I was still in my hotel room because the stuff at the World, my meeting, I didn't really have any specified time to be at this meeting, but, I was going to run over to the Pentagon so I had a suit and tie on. Well, then the World Trade Center stuff hit. And I was on the 17th floor of the Residence Inn, which is the top floor, facing Reagan National Airport, Washington DC. That was my . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, it was like 8:43 in the morning.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, something like that. And, I was watching, I turned on the TV and I happened to see this, the World Trade Center in flames and they were talking about it. And then the second plane hit, you know, and they went, oh my God. Well, about this time, I sat down. I said, oh shit. You know, I said, this, this looks like a terrorist. I mean, it became obvious to everybody when the second plane hit that it was intentional. And, I thought about the Pentagon and they even talked about it on the TV. I was listening. They said, yeah, when this happens, the Pentagon goes into a, kind of a

situation, the mode where they have these plans in place and they take people to secure locations and they do all there stuff, whatever it is that they do. And, so, I went outside, or, out of my room and down the hall, which is right, I was on the second room from the end and you could see the Pentagon right there. And I looked out the window and I, you know, I didn't see anything different as far as security or what not.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Do you know what time it was at this point?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: It was three minutes before the airliner hit the Pentagon. I know that, whatever, I know this because . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: So that would be about 9:40 in the morning by this point.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. And, I was, I had looked out the window and I watched, there was a helicopter, it was a little odd, that came in to land. And I had gone back to the room and I heard this helicopter, it was a Huey, and I could tell by the sound,

MALE INTERVIEWER: That's the Park, that would have been the Park Police Huey.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Okay. This is before the airliner hit.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, there was, he was, he had been directed to try to intercept that airline.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, you are kidding me? That's what he was doing there?

MALE INTERVIEWER: To intercept it and he was going to try to distract it. We interviewed the pilot and we actually got a flight where he, where he took off and the whole, that's one of the . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I'll be damned. See, it was odd, because it came . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Don't tell anyone about that story because that's one of our, I think that's one of the best stories that's going to come out of this. We don't want the press to get this.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, don't worry. No. You know, there was always, I always wondered, I even asked that night. As I go through this, you'll, this will all make sense to you because I wondered what happened to that damn helicopter because I had heard him and I said, that's a God damn Huey and he's coming in at a weird angle. I said, well, but, they did have a front come in, maybe he's coming in. So, I went over to that same window and I saw this guy come in and I saw him . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: He apparently took off from, he was, he had landed, at one point, near the Memorial Bridge and there's that strip of land before you get to the Memorial Cemetery. And, I'm wondering if you saw him just as he was taking off from that.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No. I saw him, I'll tell you exactly what I saw him do. I saw him circle by the, between the hotel and the Pentagon, going toward the landing pad where that airliner ultimately hit. And, I thought that he landed on the pad. I actually thought, you couldn't actually see the pad, he disappeared on that side of the building and I thought he had landed. So,

MALE INTERVIEWER: And it was a white and blue Huey?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it was. It was a white and blue Huey.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that's the one. Yeah.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: And, I thought that he had landed. So, I said, hah, they must be dropping somebody off because of this thing that's going on in New York. So, I didn't think much of it. I went back to the room and it was probably two minutes later when I felt this huge explosion and the building, it's, like, I thought the building was coming down, the hotel. So, I had gone back, and, it was probably no more than two minutes, it didn't seem like very long at all, it was just a couple of minutes and I felt this explosion and felt the hotel shake and I thought it was coming down. And, I went, oh shit, you know, I thought it was a bomb. And, I said, you know, they bombed the hotel, and I said, no, they wouldn't bomb the hotel, the Pentagon is right next door. So, I ran out of my room to that

same window and right where I had last seen that helicopter I saw this huge fireball just going up. And this is something, all you saw pictures of was the black smoke afterwards. Nobody got a picture of that fireball. It was, I have a camera, unfortunately. And, I saw this fireball going up and I thought, oh shit, that helicopter crashed on take off or something, maybe. But, I said, no, that wouldn't have been that big of an explosion. I said, that, you know, it had to be a bomb. Anyway, these other people came out and they were looking out, out the window, and I ran back into my room and I took off my suit and I put on my uniform because I knew that obviously there was going to be, and this is, the Pentagon had just blown up, you know, there is going to be some need for people down there. And, so, I put on my Border Patrol uniform and I made a couple of quick phone calls. One to headquarters Border Patrol to let them know that the Pentagon had been hit so that they would be aware of it because they had already started thinking about, you know, tightening up security, but nobody really had done anything yet. And then, of course, when DC started getting hit, everybody went into panic mode. So, I made a call to them. And, while I was getting dressed, and then I, instead of getting on the elevator I ran down 17 flights of stairs and out the front door and into just complete chaos out there. It was at the intersection of Army Navy and Fern, is where the entrance, the south entrance to

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the Pentagon is. And, you know, I looked around and I didn't see anybody in uniform and the intersection was just crowded with people looking back, stunned. And, you know, people, sirens going off everywhere. Smoke was thick. It was, it smelled, you know, just, really bad. And I thought about, my initial thought was, well, I can jump on one of these rescue vehicles and go in and give them a hand, but, you know, I didn't have a radio. I had no equipment. And, I saw the intersection and I said, no. I said the best thing that you can do, since you don't have any communications is just sit here and direct traffic and get people in and out efficiently. And, make sure that the, you know, the people that get into the Pentagon are ones that need to be in there and make sure the rescue crews get in. Keep the riff-raff out, keep the intersection clear. So, basically, that was what my focus became, unannounced, nobody's telling me, nobody asked me.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Were you armed?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yes. I had my weapon on. I had my Smokey the Bear hat on, and my [unintelligible] uniform. And . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: That, actually, was a very critical entrance because, of course, everything, a lot of the fire coming from Arlington usually would come, come from the other side of 395 from Clarendon Boulevard. But, you know, of course, with the crash and everything, that was probably out of the question.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, you know, I didn't know much about how the traffic pattern worked around there, but, what I did notice right away was that, basically, in, within the Pentagon there was no, what I would have thought, a containment ring of people that were, you know, in case of a disaster like this, that would take over security. There was none of that. It was just like chaos. And, you know, I saw real quickly that anybody that drove in there, or that could get in there, or just going wherever they wanted to within the compound, real quickly. I mean, this is within 10 minutes. And, I will say, within, I'm kind of getting a little ahead of myself here, when they, when I got out there, I got the intersection cleared, first of all. And then the priority, obviously, was, let's get the pedestrians out. Let's get the emergency crews in. And, if ambulances or whatever were coming out, they, obviously I would stop traffic and get them out to wherever the hell they wanted to go. And then you had all these other police cars and unmarked cars and secret service and people showing up. And then they did a massive, this was before they did the big evacuation. The people had come out, but then all of a sudden I guess they decided, hey, we are going to evacuate everybody. And I looked up and I just saw this, hordes of people just coming out, all the way across from one side to the other. They filled that whole road up coming out of the Pentagon. So, we got all them people out.

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And, then they were, kept coming up and saying that there were inbound airliners, there were two more and they had, they were, one was headed to the White House and then we had heard somebody come out and say they hit the Jefferson Monument. I mean, there was all kinds of stuff. But, they did say there were two aircraft unaccounted for. So, about that time, the F-15's or F-16's or whatever the hell they were, showed up, two of them. It buzzed the Pentagon. I think it was two of them. I can't remember. But, anyway, it buzzed the Pentagon. It seemed like they were 50 feet, they went right through the smoke and then pulled straight up and then, then that's all you heard from that day until, I just got back from DC, they are still up there. It's probably not the same guys but, that sound never went . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: We actually interviewed those guys.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Did you, because those guys came, I was in the intersection when those guys came screaming in and it was an awesome sight to see that.

MALE INTERVIEWER: One of them is kind of a flamboyant guy. His name is Major Dan Raising Cain with the DC Air National Guard.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No shit. Dan Raising Cain. Huh?

[Laughter]. [**Recording goes blank for a brief period.**] There was two of them that came in, wasn't it?

MALE INTERVIEWER: It was two of them. One of them, I guess, was coming back from North Carolina. He had some training rounds,

very little, not a lot of gas. And, the other guy was just your regular Air Guard guy who was on-duty that day.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Wow! They, but, it was, it was just, you know, I couldn't believe what I was seeing, number one. I mean, I was just, never, ever did I think that I would see the Pentagon on fire, number one. Number two, did I ever think that we would see military air coverage over DC. And, I'll tell you what, to be honest with you, at this point, up until this point, I still did not know that it was an airliner that hit the Pentagon. I did not know until, God, it was, I think, one of the emergency crews that actually told me what, what had happened. They had seen it happen and I said, you are kidding me? They said, no, it's an airliner. You couldn't see it. It was gone. Of course, I stayed there all day. There was a Mint, Department of Mint police officer there as well. I didn't even know they had a police department, the Mint. And, he was a nice guy and, anyway, I'm, you know being in the Border Patrol, hell, I stood traffic checkpoints and this and that for years, and I didn't get, it was, I actually enjoyed it and I wanted to do something and I felt that was the most, that was the best thing I was equipped to do. And, people listened to me. I mean, I had the Smokey the Bear hat on, nobody, you know, I had a couple, one CNN reporter run through, about ran me over, and if I'd have had time, I'd have gone done and arrested him. But, I just, he didn't threaten

the Pentagon and there was some other Japanese news crew that tried to sneak in, this was later on during the day. But, the initial, you know, what I did was just, they had a triage set up at the Resident's Inn, at the hotel there, where they were taking some of the patients into. And then doctors would come out and they would say, hey, I got somebody critical here, I need an ambulance and there aren't any. What do I do? And, I said, well, how bad, you know? I said, they've got injured in here, you've got, what, is this death or not? Is this life or death? And, that one time the doctor, I don't, you know, I didn't get his name, he said, yeah, this one's life or death. I said, okay. The next ambulance I'll divert him over there. So, an ambulance would show up and, you know, I would say, they'd say, hey, we are supposed to report over here. And, I said, look, there's a critical, it's a life or death, the doctor says if they don't get transported they are going to die right in the hotel there. So, they went in there and I don't know what happened. They took somebody away and I assume it was this person, but, I never got names or any of that stuff. There was just, you know, and I don't know whatever happened, and where these people who, these people were supposed to pick up, you know, it was just a matter of, it was pretty chaotic. I mean, people, you just had to make decisions. And, it's just like, at this point, about, within the first hour, people started, there

were some people that were trying to get back into the Pentagon that were called back in. This was predictable, I mean, obviously, you know, the whole thing wasn't shut down and they were going to need some of their staffers and people in there. But, and, at this time, I thought, well, surely by now they'll have a contingency plan to whether they are going to bring security out to be able to check documents or whatever, and, none of that. There was nothing like that. It was, quite frankly, left up to me. There was myself, the Mint guy that showed up, and there was an Arlington police officer that showed up. And, but, I was the one that stayed in the intersection, did the traffic and would clear people in. And, they would come up and, you know, I'd talk to people, and you can recognize valid from non-valid as far as legitimate, you know, just by talking people [unintelligible]. You know, you had generals drive up and say, hey, we've been called back. Well, you knew, you know, they are in uniform, they got two stars on, you know, appear to be of American descent, or whatever. You talk to them a few minutes and bam, go ahead, sir, you know, whatever. And there were other people. And there were some people that we did not let in that just didn't seem to have, they were trying to [unintelligible] reporters. We didn't have a lot of problems with reporters, though, because I think they couldn't get in because of the flights. But, that was later on in the day, we started having

problems with the reporters. But, we, you know, there was several, a lot of people that went in, three stars, you know, I think there was even a four star general that went in there. You know, I don't know who it was. So, there was just a lot of people, and . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: In this Residence Hotel?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, no, they went into the Pentagon.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, went into the building.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, into the, you know, let them into the compound from, you know, we would not, we had blocked it off. And, it was basically up to me, I imposed that upon myself, it was up to me who got in the Pentagon. And, I did not think that was real, even though I thought, yeah, I can handle this, but, what if I wasn't there. I mean . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did DPS, what they call the Defense Protective Service, which is the police department that controls the building and the grounds around the building, did anyone ever talk to you or say, you're doing a good job, or, we know longer need you?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No. No.

MALE INTERVIEWER: You had no contact with DPS or Arlington County?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Arlington County, yeah. The guys, the police officers, yeah. But, they had no direct orders on what

type of ID or anything. And, it was, it was kind of left up to, it was left up to us, there was nothing, no instructions that anybody came out. And I stood out there for 10 hours that day. And, the Arlington County guys that showed up, they ended up staying there, not the same guys, but they ended up manning that intersection for several days or a week, or, I don't, a long time. As a matter of fact, I was, they are still there. They still got cops with their lights going off all around the Pentagon to this day.

MALE INTERVIEWER: With the Border Patrol uniform, someone once told me that you basically have jurisdiction 50 miles from any border.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, it's . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: You have, like, one of the broadest jurisdictions in the country.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: It's 100 miles from any border. But, it depends, actually, we have jurisdiction throughout the United States. We are federal law enforcement officers. Now, you have, what you are talking about, jurisdiction, you have right to access, warrantless access to property within 100 miles of the border. For certain reasons you have absolute right to access to patrol the border within 25 miles without warrant. But, when you are talking about jurisdiction, your jurisdiction is nationwide. I mean, there can be an immigration law violation anywhere in

the United States and I'm authorized to make that arrest. It doesn't have to happen within 100 miles of the border. It just, that gives you more warrantless entry rights as far as being on this property, on that land, to do certain things that you wouldn't normally, you would normally need permission to do for an other law enforcement agency.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, essentially, it didn't really matter that you didn't work for DOD or what have, or Arlington County, but just by putting on that uniform you could act, you know, in a full . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: You do what you got to do, and that's the bottom, I mean, I've been in this, you know, in our job, we want our people to have to make decisions on their own. They are working 40 miles from anybody a lot of times. They are making traffic stops, they are making very critical decisions on whether to detain someone based on, you know, whatever they have, evidence that they may have or what not. So, we expect our people to be thinking on their feet. So, you know, this type of situation called for, in my judgment, for me to make a determination on, number one, how best could I be of service and ensure that I'm a benefit to somebody? I determined that to be by playing traffic cop and making sure that the efficient, the intersection was cut clear and the emergency crews were able to get in and out efficiently, expediting the process of,

hopefully, saving some lives, getting people out, back to hospitals and getting people in to help save lives. And that, to me, became a very obvious, critical thing to do. Number two, you know, when you wear a uniform and you are a federal law enforcement officer, you are still a citizen. You, any citizen could have got in that intersection and done the same thing. The uniform commands some respect because you are in uniform. And, knowing how to do that and just being confident in your ability to do that, I think, is something that [unintelligible] do. We do that every day. And, we've jumped into roles, you know, we don't normally go and pull over drunk drivers, per se. You know, we don't, that's not what we are looking for. But, if I see somebody that's, you know, weaving from lane to lane and, you know, that's obviously going to wreck, now, I've got the equipment to pull him over and stop him. I have done that and detained him until the State Police got there. I mean, you do what you got to do. And, this is one of those situations where you just did what you had to do and without anybody being able to tell you how to do it. And, that's kind of how we work anyway. It kind of fit the image of what we do in that situation.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, you got over to the area about 10 and you were there until what time?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I stayed out there until about 6 or 7 that evening, or 8. It was late. Right before sundown.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did you, did anyone give you any food, water?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, yeah, there was people, the hotel, the Residence Inn, they were great. They brought up, and then there was people that, in vehicles that would come up, and they were bringing us water and they had sandwiches and stuff. And, honest to God, I don't know who they were. They just showed up with water and stuff. And, yeah, it was very, very nice of them. And, as a matter of fact, they did that for the, I was there two days and then I went back to headquarters, but, they, yeah, there was a lot of people doing a lot of things. And, the hotel, I just can't say enough about the hotel there, the Residence Inn.

Initially, they were going to make, DEA decided they were going to have a triage there in DEA headquarters. Well, I knew that wasn't going to fly because they had security concerns. I mean, big time security concerns, you know, with the World Trade Center getting hit, the Pentagon, and, who's next? DEA would be a good target, quite frankly, their headquarters is right there. I think somebody realized that wasn't a good idea real quick and they switched it over to the hotel. And the people at the hotel, the Residence Inn, I can't say, as a matter of fact, I've . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: It's a Marriott Residence Inn?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: It's a Residence Inn by, yeah, I think it is by Marriott. It's the one on Army Navy Drive, right there, right off of 395, Army Navy Drive there. But, they were fantastic about it. I mean, they brought beds, they had beds down there. They had everything, it was incredible. And, anyway, you know, toward, pretty much we had, the next focus for me became, because there was a lot of traffic and things were starting to get backed up and people, we are seeing the same people over and over again where I had to tell a few people to, you know, if I saw them again, they were going to be taken away because they became nuisance traffic after a while. And, so, finally, made the determination to block the traffic off at Eads and not let anything from Eads all the way down to, I don't know where that, down that shopping mall on Army Navy Drive, probably for about a five block area.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Pentagon City.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. We blocked traffic off altogether so we were just dealing with emergency vehicles. And then, oh, it was several hours later, they decided to open up 395 South and let people onto that. So, we let traffic back on Army Navy Drive again and just kind of monitored it. And that's when we ran into some problems with some press people. Not serious, but, I had one, I had to step in front of a vehicle. I had cleared this one vehicle into the Pentagon and this vehicle tried to tailgate

them in there. And I just stepped in front of it and they stopped.

MALE INTERVIEWER: That was the Japanese crew?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That was the Chinese or Japanese, I couldn't tell. But, they pretended like, they didn't speak English, they had cameras, and, I just said, I looked at them and I said, where you going? We go there. I said, no you're not. I said, you see these handcuffs? Uh-huh. I said, I know you don't speak English now but I see you again and you try this again they are going to on you. I wasn't putting up with any crap from nobody. And, anyway, I said, you back up right now. They backed up and they left and I never saw them again. But, you know, I mean, of all the crazy things to try and do, sneak into an area like that under that critical situation, I would have, I don't know what they were thinking. You know, and, then, anyway, later on that night, I got with some of the cops there at the Arlington, we jumped in a squad car and went over to the site before it became a crime scene. It was still a rescue operation. And we walked right up to the hole in the building. We were right there. And it was amazing. I couldn't believe there was an airliner in there. You couldn't see it. It was gone. It was just, it was, and it was, people were looking at the firefighters and they were just stunned. And, all of them were talking about their brothers in New York that had, that

they knew about, the other firefighters in New York. And, you know, it was just disbelief. And they, and then we left and then went back the next day. Well, then, by that time, it had become a crime scene. The FBI had roped it off and they wouldn't let anybody in there unless you had a need to be in there, which, that time I didn't, need to be, you know, next to the building. So, things got . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: What time did you finally get to bed?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, that night, actually, I don't know that I ever slept very well that night, probably real late. By the time I actually, I never actually saw a TV until, probably, about 10:30 or 11:00 and I sat down and actually started watching the stuff on TV. And, I . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Were your relatives concerned about you?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: You know, yeah, as a matter of fact it was something I didn't think about. I had my cell phone with me and my wife called. And she was crying, and, she goes, you know, Corrine called, she's crying, my daughter, she's 19, she's married to an Agent, a Border Patrol Agent in Laredo, and my son, I guess they had both called. And they were worried and what not and they were all upset and crying. So, my wife called and she was crying. And, she said that I needed to call the kids. And, I said, look, I can't, I'm busy. Where are you? I said, well, I'm right here at the Pentagon, you know. And, she

said, well, you know, you need to tell them you are okay. And, she was all upset. And, I said, no. I said, you tell them. You call them. I said, I don't have time. I said, you call them and tell them I'm fine. Yeah, they were very concerned. I just didn't think, it didn't dawn on me to call them. I mean, Washington is a big city, what are the odds, you know? And I just wasn't in that mode of thinking, hey, you know, this is, this needs to be, I need to call my family, because I was working. And, actually, I think it was a thing, the only way I could have dealt with it, really, being there. It was one of those things, I told I don't know how many people, I said, you know, I wish it would have never happened, but, I am glad that I was there to see it because that's something I will never forget, ever. It was incredible. And, I was, I did wonder. I went over that night and I had talked to these cops about this helicopter. I said, you know, minutes before this plane landed I know this helicopter came over here. And, I said, but there was no sign of him. And, I said, obviously, if he hit, the airplane hit the helicopter, because the way he came in, he actually, the airliner actually hit short of the Pentagon and then went back up and went into the Pentagon because we saw the debris. And, actually, they had pointed it out to us on the way in there. And, I said, what about the helicopter? They said, what helicopter? I said, well, there was one that was here just like

two minutes before this airliner hit. I said, I didn't know if he took him out as well. But, I could tell that where the airliner went in it would have missed the helipad anyway. And, I said, well, maybe he took off and I just didn't hear him. But, that's, when you mention that about the, that makes a lot more sense, that he probably never did land, he just, I don't know.

MALE INTERVIEWER: He just swooped in, I guess, from, I didn't interview him, my colleague across the street in the Marine History Office is the one who interviewed him. And, from what I gather, he got a call, he was, in the area, and he got a call saying, try to intercept this plane, try to distract the plane, try to do something to, you know, prevent the plane from going into the Pentagon.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Then they knew it was headed toward the Pentagon before it actually hit the Pentagon, then?

MALE INTERVIEWER: They, they, well, yeah, because they got, that's the same, one of the Air National Guard's, well, one of the Air Force, I think he's an Air Force pilot, no, or an Air National Guard, not Dan Cain, but the other guy, was flying in from North Carolina. He had been doing some kind of training exercise. And he had some training rounds. And they told him to basically intercept, stop the plane at all costs.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Right.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And then, those two F-16's were then ordered to shoot down the plane coming in from Somerset, from Somerset County in Pennsylvania.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, I guess that helicopter swung around, but, by the time he got around the plane was already into the building.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, he had already, he had already been through that area once because I assumed he landed, then I left the window and went back, and then when I, when the plane hit I went out there, and it was just like a couple of minutes. So, he, he had already passed through there, maybe he didn't see him coming. Because if the thing is coming at 500 miles an hour, he could have been several miles away. The helicopter wouldn't have seen him yet. You know, I don't know how, the other thing that's interesting . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: He's a police, he's an Aviation Sergeant with the United States Park Police.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I'll be darn. Yeah, but I saw that helicopter and I wondered, I always wondered what happened to that guy, or, if he saw anything. You know, I said, God, he had to have seen it happen.

MALE INTERVIEWER: He saw, he saw the plane go in and then the next thing he started doing is med-vac'ing people out of there.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Right. Yeah, I saw, that's that picture that you see with that helicopter going in, within all the smoke. I've seen that picture. I've got it on the Internet. I've had so many people send me pictures from the Pentagon and stuff. I have friends in the Pentagon. Now, what about, let me ask you something. There was a, I was looking out my window. I have a perfect view of Reagan National Airport. An American Airlines plane had just taken off, I mean, not 30 seconds before this plane hit the Pentagon. And he was, and they were taking off to the north, to the, different than the normal way. In other words, they were taking off toward the Pentagon. They were taking off that way. Well, this American Airlines plane had just taken off, I mean it couldn't have been a minute, 30 seconds before this plane hit the Pentagon. Did anybody talk to that guy? He had to have seen this happen as well.

MALE INTERVIEWER: No, but that's a good, that's another good lead for either myself or one of the other people to follow up on. The other good lead that, from this interview, are those people at the Residence Hotel.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, yeah. They were incredible.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I have to interview those people.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Kristen is one of the managers. She was there that morning. I don't know what she, what department she's in charge of now, but, she was there that morning. There was a

guy, God, I don't know if I have his card anymore, but, he worked for one of the other departments, federal departments, that was in the room next to mine. And he took some pictures, but they didn't come out very well. He had a little, one of them pocket camera things, one of them portable things. And he, and, actually, he told me something very interesting that I thought that the FBI, and when he told me, I said, you need to tell the FBI that. And, he said, he would. And, I actually did the next day but I don't know that they ever followed up on it. But, what he had said was that the night before he had heard a bunch of racket out at the window. And, when he popped his head out the door there were a bunch of Arab looking guys laughing and joking, pointing at the Pentagon. This was, like, he said, about 1, 2 in the morning. And, he said, as soon as he popped out, they all just kind of got real quiet and they left in a hurry. They never said a word.

MALE INTERVIEWER: They were in the Residence Hotel?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, they were on, at that window right at the 17th floor, right next to his room, and making a whole bunch of racket. He said, like, loudly talking in joyous tones, whatever, however he put it. He said they looked like they were of Arabic descent and all this. And, I said, well, you know, that's something that, I said that would be a perfect vantage point for somebody. You always, in law enforcement, you always,

it's like the military, the military always wants to assess its damage. You know, now we have ways of doing that, you know, with satellites and things like that. But, they are all, remember in Vietnam was the body counts and now you have, well, terrorists do the same thing. Anybody that does anything destructive wants to see what they did. And, in my mind, this was important because, I'm thinking, hey . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Oh, so, this was after the fact?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: This was, it happened . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: This was the night after that these guys were laughing and carrying on?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, this was the night before.

MALE INTERVIEWER: This was the night before. And, who is the guy?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I don't remember his name and I don't know if I've got his card. But, he was staying in the room right next door to mine. If you talk to Kristen, she can tell you, because she'll have the name of the guy that was in that room right next door to me. And, and you can mention my name to her. And, I don't remember my room number, but, I, she'll remember me.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I'm actually, I talked to the Chief of the Washington Field Office today. So, I may just call him back after this interview and say, hey, you know, this came out of this interview.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, and, see, the thing is, and I did tell, it was the next day, I was talking to one of the FBI guys over there on the, at the Pentagon site. And, I told him this. I said, you know, this guy that is staying in this room, and, I said, I don't have his name, but, he told me this. I said it may or may not be anything. But, at the time, he goes, yeah, I'm not doing that part of it, but I'll make note of it and I'll get it to so and so who does. Well, I've never gotten a call. I figured they would be able to run it down by identifying him and getting a hold of him. And, then, if there were these people staying in the hotel they would be able to find out who they were, or at least what names they were using at the time, or whatever. And, it seemed to me, the more I thought about it, to be very interesting. Because if you go and look, other than the DEA building, this building has the best view of the Pentagon, absolutely the best view. Now, there is only a couple of reporters that finally figured it out when they were trying to get pictures and we wouldn't let them up on the freeway. We didn't want anybody that close. A couple of them figured out, hey, we'll just go in the hotel go up to the 17th floor and there's a perfect shot out that window. And, you can go, if you go up there, I would encourage you to go over there. Go up to the 17th floor, right as you get off the elevators, you can look out that window and see the Pentagon. If you turn to the right,

and you go down the hallway, all the way at the end on the Pentagon side is a little window that's not as big as the window right off the elevators, that's the one that I was looking out of.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And that's the one that the . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That the, yeah, that he said all these Arab guys were looking at and pointing to the Pentagon and laughing and doing all this stuff. But, the reporters and stuff, it was a perfect view of the Pentagon, right after you get off the elevators on floor 17. I've got, I took pictures, you know, a couple of weeks later, before I got ready to leave of my view from where I was from my room and from the window and from the, from the window by the elevator as well. And then I went down to the intersection, took pictures of the intersection and stuff. Of course, by that time, you couldn't tell anything.

MALE INTERVIEWER: What did you do the next day?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: The next day I just went back down, well, actually, I put on my uniform and I went over to the site and I had a friend that worked in the Pentagon and I had been talking to them. And they drove all night getting back there because nobody could fly. And, I went, actually, into the Pentagon and, you know, toured it. You could smell the gas and stuff permeating throughout the building. I think there were, it was an as-needed only, or, if you wanted to come to work you could,

but nobody was going to make, type of situation other than the military people that had to be there. And, you know, I talked to, I helped direct traffic, and, you know, just did, I didn't do that much the next day. I just, kind of, was there around the Pentagon and, you know, talking to people. You know, the first day was the critical day. The second day was kind of a day just to, I don't know, be present and let people, you know, the security had tightened up quite a bit. They finally, they had gotten their shit together on day two. And, you know, it's amazing, that, people, the stories that came out. I would have seen it, you know, and they said, well, this plane went over and it circled the White House, it came, I said, no, that wouldn't have happened because I would have seen it out my window. I could have seen that. Where the planes circled had to be short of where I was because I would have seen it go around my hotel room. It didn't. It had to turn short and go back around and come in and hit the Pentagon. And that's amazing when you go in the Pentagon that the, if they would have hit the other side of the building that faces DC, they would have taken out most of the leadership. But, they thought, and I'm thinking, my perspective, these guys saw the landing pad, figured, landing pad, that means probably the most important guys are near the landing pad, is my thought process of why they would have hit that specific area, as opposed to any other area. And, there's

luck, and, just lucky that it was the only part that was reinforced with steel or it could have taken out a lot more of the Pentagon. But, that was, I remember that day was just, you know, the smell of the fumes, the gas fumes and stuff was pretty overwhelming, but you didn't notice it until, I got, kind of, a headache later on that evening from it. But, it was, just seeing the stunned, the people in the military uniforms coming out and they were just stunned. They didn't know what to do. And then the buses, you know, we finally, they, we had to get people out of there, and, you know, again, we didn't know, I didn't know what the threat was anymore. You know, this was hours into it, we didn't know if maybe they were going to try trucks or buses, or God knows what. But, we had to get people out. They had these buses coming and they wanted to go into the Pentagon. I said, no, we are not going to let you in the Pentagon. And, I would get on every bus, there would be some people on the bus, and, we would send them down to the mall, but I would board all of the buses and I would, without asking, I would check the driver, make sure that they were in control of the bus. And, I would walk through the bus and say hi to everybody and come back, get off the bus and let the bus go. And, that was, just, from the Border Patrol days that we checked buses and just making sure that nobody had taken over this bus. And, you know, maybe holding a gun on the driver, you know, you would just talk to

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him and you could see that it was okay. And, I don't think anybody really knew that I was doing that, including the bus drivers, but I knew why I was doing it. And, we didn't know what the threat was at that point and everything became suspicious. You know, there were these guys, these two idiots, kind of a funny thing, about the third time they are driving around in a yellow box truck, it looked like a Ryder truck, but it didn't say Ryder on it. And they had made, like, three circles, you know. And these couple of Alexandria cops and I were standing there, we're going, you know, if I, and they looked like Arabs, but, you know, who knows, they could have been anybody, they were foreigners. But, you know, they are driving around, obviously just wanting to see what was going on. But, I wouldn't be driving a yellow Ryder looking truck around a site like that at that moment. It was just, struck us kind of funny, you know. But, they, I don't think they had anything to do with it and they weren't a threat to us or anything, but, it was just, I wouldn't be anywhere near that place with a yellow truck. You know, especially after Oklahoma City.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Right.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: But, it was, I'll tell you, it was an incredible day.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And when did you finally return to, to home?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I came back, God, let's see, September 29th, I think, somewhere around the end of September, no, October. No, it was October 8th. October 8th.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, one thing I didn't ask you about your career, but, had you thought much about terrorism in your law enforcement career? I guess the Border Patrol makes you think a lot about those kinds of things.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, yeah. We've been preaching that for years and years and years and years and years and will continue to. You know, terrorism has always been a threat to this country. And, it's, until Oklahoma City, it was always foreigners. You know, we have the most free, the freest country in the world. I think Americans, we get a little complacent and assume everything is going to be all right. But, they're, as we found out on 9/11, there's people who just don't like the success and freedom that we have. And, we do have, and we have been saying, and we could, there's documents after documents after documents that have been set forward, you know, stressing the need for more resources, especially along the northern border and more night vision cameras, aircraft, resources for the southern border, and the northern border as well. You know, because of these specific threats. Because we don't know what we are going to run across out there. People, a lot of people think, well, they are just chasing illegal aliens, you know,

what's the big deal? Well, mixed in with those illegal aliens are narcotics and potential terrorists as well. And, and this is something that they are going to have to watch very critically as they go through this process because they are now, all the terrorists, from what I understand, they entered with valid passports and visas. And what they did was violated their status after they entered the country. Okay. So, now, but there are checks and balances . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: In other words, overstayed their status.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Correct. Correct.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I25.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, I94's. But now they are supposed to, they are supposed to, if they are students, they are supposed to check in and there is a procedure where if they don't show up for school or don't register that the IMS is notified. Well, these kind of procedures kind of went by the wayside. There were a lot of politics involved and I'm not going to get into the minutia of that, but there were a lot of reasons why a lot of people didn't want to harass and chase down all these people in the interior, for political reasons. Anyway, those procedures for reporting and following up on people that didn't exactly go where they said they were going to go were kind of ignored. Well, now they are not going to be anymore. I mean, I'm telling you, they are on the hot trail now. If you, if you don't end up

going where you said you were going, there's going to be somebody looking for you. And, what's going to happen, if that becomes not the easiest way to get somebody in the country, then you have to look at the cause and effect of what your action is going to make happen. You know, for every action there's a reaction. And, if you start squeezing that bubble, it pops somewhere else. You know, we've been saying that for years. We keep putting pressure in, you know, staffing up San Diego, staffing up these other places along the border, Tucson, all these other places. As soon as you get those places under control, man, your other areas along the border are just going to go nuts, you know, with traffic and narcotics and everything else. And it's proven itself to be true. The same theory with terrorist. You know, if you, they have a way of getting in the country. You take that away from them, they are going to go to a Canada exempt, twice as many countries from visa requirements as the United States does. So, a lot of people that can get into Canada with just a valid passport, but they don't need a visa. And, it's just a porous border across to get into the United States from there, if they want to do it that way. So, you know, there's a lot of issues that need to be addressed. I don't pretend that I have all the solutions, but, I certainly would love to be a part of the solution. And, I certainly can identify the problems that we have, as others have before me, and we will

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continue to do. You know, we are not using this as a trumpeting tool to trumpet our cause. We think this is a, this is a national security issue that needs to be thought of in that regard. And, you know, I talked to a friend of mine who is a United Airlines pilot, after this, and, he told me, he said, you know, I asked him, I said, what are you doing? Because he's in the Air National Guard as well. He said, hey, this is the first time they've ever actually used the Air National Guard for what their intended purpose was. You know, I had never really thought of that, but, that's exactly right, to protect the skies of the United States.

MALE INTERVIEWER: On the east coast they had two stations for NORAD, two alert stations. One at Otis Air Force Base, or, Otis, it's an Air National Guard now on Cape Cod and then Langley. And, those were the only bases that had any planes on any kind of status, alert status, on the whole eastern seaboard of the United States.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That's amazing, isn't it. And, you know, it's, and I don't blame us. I really don't. I just, unfortunately, this is the kind of the thing that just drives the point home for you. You know, on the border, in the border, I see it every day. It is a threat to me every day. And a lot of people don't understand the threat like we do. And you don't [recording goes blank for a brief period] somebody, he's from

somewhere, he could have, maybe he would have done a terrorist act had you not caught him. So, he didn't, he wasn't able to do it. So, it doesn't become a big deal to people that it doesn't effect. So, what we'd run across every day that we can look at and say, and look around the corner and say, you know, this guy could have been a potential threat and this could have been a potential threat. We see it, but nobody else sees it. Well, 9/11 kind of just drew the picture for everybody, quite clearly, that, you know, there, maybe we do need to do something more proactive. I'm not saying that they haven't done anything. We have, the Border Patrol has built up significantly in the last ten years, but, there's a lot more work to do. And, you now, for a lot of the years, we were stagnant. And, it just, we feel that we need to be a part of national security. And, we are. Because we are out there, we are the only ones out there.

MALE INTERVIEWER: One of the, the things just from my perspective as a historian,

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MALE INTERVIEWER: Infrared.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Infrared light that you can light up, a helicopter can light up, a guy on the ground can put on night vision goggles and see everybody and they think they are in the dark still. And, we have lots of sensors out there. And, we, you have to integrate technology with human resources in order to be totally effective. And, technology can't do it alone, nor can human resources do it alone. There has to be a mix.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, that's, if you guys ever are interested in this, I've got documents, I've got a lot of interesting documents and, especially the, they were talking about this thing called

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little off topic, but . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it's incredible what they've done. And, I've, I know there's a lot of technical systems being, updated technology systems being used in the war right now that are just unbelievable. And, a lot of them, we don't even know about yet. But, I know that they've really come a long way. Where were you when this thing hit DC, the communication between people and people talking to each other and the American flags,

the display of patriotism immediately was incredible, overwhelming. It was just, it was real cool to see. And then, I drove back, when I drove back from Washington, because I took my Government vehicle up there because I'm a man and I don't know how to pack for two and one-half months so I just took everything I owned, threw it into my Government Tahoe and off I went to DC. But, driving back across the country was incredible. Every little marquee, little café would have, you know, what their menu was and then there was the old God Bless America, or, you know, we support our troops or firefighters and flags and, I mean, you name it, there were. If somebody were into this, and I'm not, but, I thought about it, if somebody would have been able to do that, and probably still could, take a camera and just go and just take pictures of all of these little monuments and things that people have done all over the country, across the country, that, and make a book out of it. It would be really neat, or, at least in our work or something out of it would have been. There's some really neat stuff that people have thought of, you know, and done. And, every trucker, every trucker in the, you know, coming across, you know, has got something on their truck. You know, I mean, it's just incredible.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I mean, even, where I go in West Virginia, I went back a couple of weeks later and I talked to the Tucker County EMS and Fire. And, they are like, yeah, we sent people to

New York, you know, Davis, West Virginia. These are, there may be 600 people in this town. I mean, it really, really had an impact.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I met some good people that day. They had a, some good officers, a, and I don't remember their names, but, they had a substation down there in Crystal City that actually was, I think it was, it's actually a fire house somewhere that they had made a substation out of and that's where they were mustering out of. And, those, and I went over there and they were all good guys. And, you know, hell, they gave me a ride. As a matter of fact, it was that first night, and we went over to the Pentagon and, I don't know if this is something that they would want published or not, but it didn't, I guess it probably wouldn't matter, but, we went over there that night, like I said, and walked around and looked at things and just went, oh my God, just incredible. And then we left and went and did a few things and then I, they said, hey, well, is there anywhere you need to go before, you know, what do you want to do? And, I said, they had to go by the station, I said, well, yeah, take me back, can you take me back to the hotel? Yeah. I said, well, can you stop at a 7-11 on the way? Sure. So, we stopped. I grabbed me a six pack of beer and they dropped me off at the hotel. And, this was late, you know, and that's when I

went upstairs and sat down with my six pack of beer and turned on the TV.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And tried to decompress.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, and then people said, are you still going to stay on the top floor. I said, hell yeah, I survived that, I don't think that this is going to be a problem. But, what was eerie after that was no planes out of Reagan National the rest of the time I was there. It was, and it used to be, I love airplanes. I fly. I'm a pilot.

MALE INTERVIEWER: You are a pilot?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. I'm a private pilot, as well. And, that's, so I, I loved that when I got there, Kristen is the one I called en route and I said, the manager I told you, I said, that's how I met her, I said, Kristin, I'm coming in I just want to make sure my reservations are in tact. She goes, yeah, we have you, you're going to be with us for a while. I said, yeah. She goes, any special needs? I said, hey, just something with a good view. And, she goes, I'll get you set up and she gave me the best room in the hotel, I mean, the best view of the airport and Washington, DC and it was cool. And, you really, if you really want to look at . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: This Kristin woman at this Residence Hotel, I have to interview her, she seems like she experienced a lot at the . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, she was in the hotel, you know, they, I don't know, they went through a lot in the hotel, very quickly setting up beds and making, turning the hotel into an impromptu hospital, basically. And they, there was no questions. There was never, I mean, and she, she didn't have to call anybody. She didn't have, it was within her authority, which I thought was great. That's how we work, you know. She was able to go provide food, water, whatever. They gave their van, I'll give you an example, they gave their van to the rescue, some rescuers. They needed transportation to haul injured. They gave up their van that they use, they use to haul people to the airport and back to just a firefighter that came in and said hey, we need your, here's the keys. They threw the keys. They didn't see the van for a week. They asked me at one time, they said, are you going over to the Pentagon? I said, yeah. They said, well, you know, we don't need it back, but, could you just check and see if the van is over there? The last time we heard, somebody said they thought they saw it over at the Pentagon. I went in there, sure enough, it was in there. Well, about a week later, they went in there and they had somebody go find it. And the keys were in it. It was, you know, it had been used and left there and they got it back and it wasn't damaged. And, but that's just what they did. And, I mean, this is a hotel. This is a business. And I got a lot of respect for these people the way

they responded. And, you know, I don't know that Kristin made the call. She's the one that I knew that was there and I saw her on the floor and she was, you know, running around taking care of stuff. Now, I would certainly love for you to talk to her because she was inside. I was outside. So, she was dealing with a lot of stuff inside [**recording goes blank for a brief period**] put it in words, really.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, what we are, I actually wrote a proposal for a monograph. And, my proposal was, we would take about 24 of the best stories, of the best, the most interesting, compelling people from, you know, all walks of life, basically. And, we would weave their personal stories into a more general history. So, you would be reading a little bit of overview and then you'd go into a personal story, like the helicopter pilot. And, so, that's why I sort of ask quite a bit of background information because, you know, if, for example, your story was picked as a personal story, then we'd say, hey this is a, you know, this is a guy from Texas and he was in the Army and, you know, in the Border Patrol for a long time. Had some, lots of interesting experiences in the Border, but, you know, nothing, nothing quite like this experience, and then go into his story. So . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, well, I'll tell you what, I'm glad to hear that helicopter pilot is okay. I, you know, I pretty much figured out that that plane didn't hit him, but, I just

never really knew where he came from, why he was there and where he went. And, that's actually good news. I often wondered about that, that guy, that helicopter pilot and what he had done and, you know, why he was there. Because it was odd, I had never, I had lived there in that hotel for a month, or, almost a month already, yeah, I think a month, and I had never seen a helicopter approach the Pentagon from that direction before. And that's, and it was a Huey and it caught my attention because Huey's make a very distinct sound. Having been in the Air Calv that's what we flew and I know that sound. And, we have one in the Border Patrol. I can actually fly it. I'm not licensed, I'm an airplane pilot, but, I can actually fly a helicopter. I've flown the Huey's and they are fun. And, but it caught my attention and I just, I never did know what happen to that guy. I immediately just assumed that he had gotten, bad timing, and gotten hit, or, you know, I didn't know.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Why don't you hold on for a second. Let me see if I can get his name for you. Hold on. I can actually try to find out what his name was because he's a pretty neat guy and I suspect if, since you guys are both police officers . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh yeah, I'd love to talk to him.

MALE INTERVIEWER: That you might want to shoot the breeze with him.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh heck, when I come back, if I could find out before I come back to DC next week, I'll meet up with the guy and buy him a beer and just, I'm glad he's alive, you know.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, he's also very willing to give people rides. [Laughter]. So . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I could probably muster that up with no problem. I mean . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, take him to Clyde's, supply him with a few beers and . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: If I give you, you got my email address, get me his name and I'll, yeah, I'll take care of that when I'm back there. But, he sounds like a, I'm just, I never knew what happened to that guy. That guy, I've often wondered about him and I've often wondered about what, what that other American Airlines pilot saw that was, that had just taken off from Reagan National and where he went. They must have diverted him to Dulles or something. I know they landed everybody pretty quickly.

MALE INTERVIEWER: He has a picture taken from that helicopter which is on, a friend of mine, his desk. And, you might be able to get a copy of that picture . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Wow! That would be cool.

MALE INTERVIEWER: From this guy. So, I'm going to try, I'm going to try to get that information.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That would be cool. I've got a bunch of stuff on the Internet, pictures, you've probably seen them all. I mean, you know, that show the damage and the, you know, a lot of the stuff that's been in, overlaid, you know, with the eagle and the American flag, and I mean, just incredible pictures. A lot of them out of New York. A lot of them from the Pentagon as well.

MALE INTERVIEWER: We actually sent some people over there to get artifacts that could eventually be part of an exhibit.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Did you get, oh, by the way, somebody told me, and I did not see this, and this person had no way of knowing. But, somebody, one of my friends came up to me not too long ago and said that A&E had done some sort of program or special on the September 11th attacks and that in that segment that they did, and I don't know how long it was, there was a, they showed me directing traffic out in front of the, and I assume, and since I was doing it, I assume the guy must have seen it because he wouldn't have known otherwise. You know, there was very few people that actually knew that I had, you know, that I had done that. I mean, there was, it was just, the headquarters people knew because when I went back they asked me, well, what did you do, you know? I said, well, this is what I did. And, basically, that was it. And, but, it was, A&E did something, about a month ago or so, I was told. But, I don't

know what it was or how long of a segment it was, if it was just, whatever, but they said they saw me and I was in uniform and they recognized me. And, so, that's floating around out there somewhere.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Huh! That would be interesting to see. The one thing that people talk about with the Pentagon is how the lights were melted and it looked like a cave with stalactites because of the melted glass.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, the yellowish light looking . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, those light fixtures.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, see, I . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: Did you see any of that?

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I didn't really notice that because they had, by the time I got over there, actually, I think it was still light. And they had brought in a bunch of lights and stuff. So, I never really paid, I mean, it was a different scene, but, you know what, I hadn't really paid attention to it beforehand to really know the difference afterwards as far as how it looked. But, I know that it, it was a little, I mean, it was just eerie to see. Now, I, I just drove by there the other day. They took that whole chunk out. They got that, like a big bite out of it, the whole box is gone. I mean, they've done a lot of work there.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, they're going to be finished sooner than anyone can believe. But, they are on a mission. I mean, they, because a friend of mine, his cousin is the architect. And these construction workers are, you know, it's no longer a job, this is like a mission, it's patriotism, it's, they want to get this thing fixed so quickly that you are not even going to be able to blink an eye.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah.

MALE INTERVIEWER: So, that's another cool thing.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it is. It is. There was a lot of, there's a lot of that going on. I just hope it sticks and, I just, you know, I hope that all, a good can only come out of this. When they, you know, it's like, I was talking to a lot of people and retrospecting over a lot of things, I knew, I remember where I was when JFK was shot. I remember where I was when Ronald Reagan went after Kadafi's house, you know, that was another one. And, you ain't heard nothing from that SOB since, have you? I mean, every time they mess with the big dog, you know, we, they don't, they underestimate our resolve. And Americans are just, are not going to stand for this. And, it's encouraging to see, you always knew it, but, this is something that pulls us all together and, you know, these people just don't understand that we have built a system and a way of doing business that is not going to be compromised. And we are not

going to let anybody take it away from us. You know, and, spend a lot of money, a lot of research, a lot of technology, but, damn it, it works. And, these camel humpers ain't gonna beat us. I'm sorry. It ain't gonna happen. You know?

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean, we are not going to let our whole way of life be snuffed out, just, just in one fell swoop.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No. No. And I love, I'll tell you what, I've met Governor Bush when he was down here. It's kind of interesting in itself. George Bush, his wife, Laura Bush spoke at my son's high school graduation, 1998, right here in Del Rio, Texas. She was the guest speaker at the high school graduation. And then in 1998, later on that year, we had the flood, '98-'99, when it went into '99, we had the flood down here. And, George Bush flew down in a little Cessna. And he came over and I was one of the first guys that, when he got off the plane, actually, I was the first Border Patrolman he came and shook hands with. It was Mike Thompson, Texas DPS, he was the Incident Commander. There was myself, who set up the command center here. And then there was another Border Patrol Supervisor and Mike brought the Governor over and he shook my, I shook his hand and said, how ya doing, you know, and just very generic. And then Steve shook his hand and they walked off to go meet the cameras and everybody. And, Steve turned to me and he says, you know, that's the next President of the United States. And, I said, yeah, I know. I

said, but, he hadn't announced it yet. But, what impressed me about him at that time was, everybody knew he was going to run for President. Being in Del Rio, Texas, wasn't going to do him any political good. He was only here because he cared. It was a genuine, you know, he had other things he could be doing. And he knew he was going to be running for President. Del Rio, Texas did him no good. He knew he wasn't going to be Governor again. It was because he cared. And, that's what I knew all along, and it wasn't until this incident happened and you saw the resolve on his face and you see the difference in how he, how he portrays himself. Because, you know, when he's running a campaign, you know, it's not, you are trying to win something, you are not really doing your job, being yourself. You can see him as himself and the resolve he's got. And there's no mincing of words there. There's no stuttering of speech. You see a man that's committed. And I'm so glad that he's the one that's in there. I, it's just incredible. And I got to meet him. And then, there were 50 cameras taking pictures of me and him shaking hands and I have yet to been able to run one of them down.

[Laughter].

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, there is this one guy who we interviewed who is an accountant for OPNAV. He's like in charge of the, of a group with OPNAV that does the Navy budget. And, his father had been in the Army. He was always, he had always been impressed

with the military. But, you know, he got an accounting degree and became an accountant and ended up working for the Navy. And, when this thing happened, he personally got a lot of people out of the building. And, like, you know, a lot of these janitors in the building are, are, like, down syndrome people, and, they, if you break their routine they just don't know what to do. They start screaming or, these people were going back to work. They were going back into the fire because they just, you know, they just didn't know what to do. And, he's like grabbing them and pulling them out, you know, holding their hand, and getting them out. And the one thing that struck me about what he was, what he said afterwards was that he didn't see this as, you know, simply a terrorist attack. He sees this as an attack personally on him. And, he's basically decided he's going to go work for the Homeland Defense Office because that's how, I mean, he saw this, not so, not just an attack on the country, but, an attack on, you know, him personally, his whole way of life, everything. So, and a lot of other people who we've interviewed feel that way as well, that, just . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. Well, that's true. I mean, that's, that's the way it feels. You go from disbelief to anger to resolve.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Resolve.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Resolve, exactly. And, that's the way it's gone and it's just been incredible. And, you know, I've never, since that day, and going back, and just talking to people, like my buddy, the pilot, both him and his wife were Air Force pilots, instructor pilots out here at Loftland [sp.]. And they both fly big, well, they are Boeing 707's, but, the KC135 Tanker.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: He had to get out because they wouldn't station them together. So, now he's flying for United and flying Tankers anyway, on the side, out of the same base she's flying out of. But, go figure. But, you know, I reached out and I talk to them quite a bit. They've reinforced the cockpit doors. And, you know, I didn't know, and I asked them. I said, you know, is it that easy? He said, oh yeah, Jeff, he goes, you wouldn't believe it, he goes, anybody, you can just push the damn thing in and you are in. I said, God, I would have thought they made that more difficult. You know what they've done? I'll tell you something that, that's really, you talk about just doing something that doesn't make a difference and not addressing the issue and I was talking to him and, do you realize that, they will not let the airline pilots, they all carry letterman [ph.] tools because, you know, screws or things come off and they fix them in the air. They won't let the pilot have a letterman tool

in the cockpit but they'll give him the airplane. Now, give me a break. Is that, that is not the issue. You know, I want the guy to have his letterman tool. I want him to screw that screw back in that falls out or whatever he has to do. Give him a bazooka. If you are going to give him the airplane, what's the point of taking his letterman tool away from him? But, this is not addressing the issue. You go through security, they got, and, quite frankly, you got still these contract people that are going to fix this, but, all they did is double the number of idiots they got out there that don't have a clue. And, that's, quite frankly, it's sad. I see it because I'm in law enforcement, but, you know, so now I got eight people checking my law enforcement ID when I, because I carry a weapon whenever I go on an airplane. I get on first, I pre-board. The pilot goes in, introduce myself to the pilot, I go around security. I got tired of being searched by people who didn't speak English and didn't have a clue. This incident, event, not in itself is predictable, but the potential for infiltrating and getting past these security people certainly was and has been predicted for years and years and years. And, I'm glad to see, and I'm a pretty much a republican, but I'm a republican by what I weigh my feelings on most of the time come, fall down on the conservative side. It isn't that I take them and what they say and I apply it to myself. And when the republicans didn't want

to federalize the people at the, the security at the airports, I thought they were, I thought it was criminal. I said, no, they need to do that because that throws a lot of factors into place. Number one, you are going to have to be a United States citizen. I think that's key. If you have a cultural interest and you have a, you can recognize things because you grew up in this country that look suspicious, you have an advantage. The other thing is you can only be a certain age. You have to meet certain standards and what not. This takes, and I was talking to one of the cops at Reagan National the other night before I flew out, or, the other morning, no, actually, before, I was picking somebody up the other night at Reagan National. And, he was saying that, you know, it was, it's going to take, they are thinking anywhere from 70% to 80% of the people that, you know, monitoring the screening at the airports out. And, that tells you something. That's good. And, what does it tell you when they let those goes wand down everybody. Now, I'm the guy that comes up. I have a gun. I have a badge. I'm presenting myself to you. They do not even have the authority to let me through. They have to call a real cop to come and verify my ID. Now, now you just think about, roll that around in your head. These are the people, the guys that aren't going to, hey, I'm the terrorist, the guy that's going to try and blow up this airplane. You know, they're over here, the cop doesn't get to see him. Okay. He's

only looking at me. I'm the guy saying I got a gun. Okay. I had a girl going through San Antonio, she goes to get my ID. And I've got my paperwork. I've done this 1,000 times and I'm signing that book. It says you got to sign, you know, it's called a LEO book, Law Enforcement Officer's book. And, she goes, have you run your briefcase through the x-ray machine yet. And, I said, no ma'am I haven't because I have a gun in there. I said, and, I know that, now you know that, and I'd rather that everybody else didn't know that. And she just kind of looked at me. Because that was the whole purpose of going around security, you don't want your gun being seen by everybody on the x-ray machine.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Right. Right.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: But, this is the kind of stuff that finally, it frustrates you when you see it and you are law enforcement. And, you go, you know, these, this is why these types of things happen. There is no way in this country, in my opinion, that they should have simultaneously been able to hijack four airliners from, you know, two or three or four different locations and do this to us. That, I mean, you are not talking about bribing a certain checkpoint here and taking advantage of a certain individual. You are taking advantage of an entire system that is flawed. And, right now they are doing the peace of mind stuff with the National Guard guys and it's

not solving the problem, it's relieving some fears, but it's not addressing the issues. The issues were never, the issues are the people that are doing the screening. I don't know how I got off on that. I just had to say my peace on that.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Yeah, the, something about, also someone who is in the federal service, they are usually going to make that their career. They've got a lot vested in it. And, they are wearing a federal uniform and the have a federal badge and they have a federal gun and they have a lot of training.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Uh-huh, that's the key. The training. That is the key. They need to be law enforcement and they need to be trained.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, you know, those guys have a lot of instincts that, you know, the guy off the street who had been flipping fries at McDonald's just doesn't have.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: That's exactly right. And, see, that's what we recognize is, you know, we talk about it, we've talked about it before 9/11, we've talked about it afterwards. But, we laugh, it was a joke, it's always been a joke, and it was an incredible joke. And, it, you know, but you are very right on when you say, when you are in law enforcement and when you are in federal law enforcement, or, any law enforcement, you pick up on things and you recognize things and you have, you have more training and you are going to get paid more so it's going to

draw from, you know, you are going to get a little higher caliber person in there. It just, it makes a big difference and a lot of things kick in as far as requirements that you have to have, meet minimum standards, U.S. citizen, pass these types of tests, academy, whatever, proficiency with firearms, these things. It all adds . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: And then constantly updated.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah. Yeah. It all adds up. And, it all makes a difference. And, I'll tell you, I don't know how many, I can tell you how many times I got frustrated with these security people, going through security so many times and just, didn't have a clue, they are clueless. And they are still clueless. They are still clueless.

MALE INTERVIEWER: And, also, status in society. When you are a federal law enforcement officer, you are federal law enforcement, that's a high, that's a high status job. And if you are a rent-a-cop at the airport, you are always looked down upon as just a, you know, just a rent-a-cop. And, you've got to get, make people feel proud about their jobs. They have to take pride in it. And then they do a good job.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, I agree. Are you, your society, your Naval Historical Society . . .

MALE INTERVIEWER: We are a part of ONB, which is part of OPNAV. Our Director reports to the Director of the Navy Staff, Vice Admiral Tracy.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: So, are you in the Navy?

MALE INTERVIEWER: I'm a civilian.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Oh, okay.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I'm a GS13 civilian with a Ph.D. in history and I write history for the Navy and other duties as assigned.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, I know that. Well, I'm a GS14 with a GED who didn't do very good in history.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, anyway, I hope you enjoy the book I'm sending you. I'd like, if our office gets the assignment to do this book, it's, hopefully we'll be able to write it in a similar way with bringing in some of these personal stories and not have it be so dry.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Well, I know the Navy took a big hit in the Pentagon that day. I think they lost more than anybody, didn't they?

MALE INTERVIEWER: They . . .

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Or was it the Army?

MALE INTERVIEWER: The Army took the biggest, I think we took the second biggest.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Okay.

MALE INTERVIEWER: I'll tell you that accounting and budget office they had, everything was on a remote server and EDS came and set up, set an office up in Crystal City. And, two days later, they were at their desks doing the Navy budget. They didn't really miss a beat. And, they had, they came in, and there was a full spread of food and all their work was there. And, some people complained and said, hey, we need more time to grieve here for our lost colleagues and co-workers. And, I guess at one point a Navy Captain, female Captain, got everybody in a room and sort of said a prayer for the people that had died. And, that helped a lot, but, what was so amazing, and it was amazing about a lot of offices, is, just how little work they missed. I mean, just how they were able to just, you know, EDS comes in, wires an entire, and, see, every five minutes there is someone coming over, you know, is your phone working, your computer working. You know, when, you know, in general, it takes a month to get a new phone in the Government, but, if you really need a phone, or the Navy budget is at stake, if it's a real crisis, things just get done.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: Yeah, it's amazing. There were a lot of programs that were saved that were on the bubble because of this, militarily. All of a sudden priorities changed and people quit challenging whether we needed certain things or not. So, I think, there are some positives out of a whole, a huge negative,

but there are going to be some positives out of this, I think, that we are going to be able to draw from. And, as a country, as a nation, I think we are headed in the right direction. I just, I want to get that individual who did this.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Who did this.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: And I want him, you know, yeah, you know, you want to hear about him, I want to hear about him dead, but, I would like, I would like him brought here and I'd like him to die on American soil.

MALE INTERVIEWER: Well, I don't think the boss across the Pennsylvania Avenue is going to give up as long as he's President.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: No, he's not. I think they underestimated him.

MALE INTERVIEWER: You know, he'll go wherever. He'll get this guy, I think. I have confidence in him.

JEFFREY MARK PARSONS: I do to. And I have a lot of confidence because of some of the things that I've heard from people that I know that happen to be in the know but they can't say. But they seem very positive and encouraged and that in itself tells me something. So, you know, that's a good thing. Well, I'll tell you, if that's all.